

ORIGIN ACTION

RM/R REP AF

ARA EUR FE

NEA CU INR

E P IO

L SEP AID

PM MC 8/15

AGR COM FRB

INT LAB TAR

TR XMB AIR

ARMY CIA NAVY

OSD USIA NSA

FBI MS

1970 APR 20 PM 4 43

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AIRGRAM

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NO.

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TO : Department of State
DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/HRREVIEWED BY *Ray* DATE *APR 18 1970*

PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA

DATE: April 17, 1970

SUBJECT : INTERNAL SECURITY: Monthly Report of Incidents, March 1970

REF :

COMMENT: Once again, it should be pointed out that this monthly report, and its attached graph of activity, is recognized by the Embassy to be only a rough indication of politically-related acts of violence in Guatemala. It is, as attempts at quantification usually are, crude, for it tries to convert events which are always complex in motivation and often in execution to lines on a chart. Further, this type of quantification often involves comparing apples and oranges; the murder of a policeman in Chiquimula is given equal weight to the kidnapping of an American diplomat while it is quite obvious that the latter requires far more in the way of organizational planning and expertise than the former, and, as such, is of far greater significance in attempts to analyze the nature of the subversive forces in Guatemala. The report does serve, however, as a vehicle through which events not previously reported can be recounted; and it gives an opportunity to add new facts concerning events already reported. Through the graph a rough estimate of trends in politically-related violence can be maintained.

SUMMARY

The month of March demonstrated dramatically the difference between the character of acts of terrorism and violence, as opposed to their numbers. Only a handful of incidents in the capital were capable of inducing a near-crisis in terms of governmental stability, while the numbers of politically-related acts of violence were less than in February. There was a diminution of activity in

Enclosure:

Chart of Incidents

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Guatemala City while the level in other areas of the country remained relatively constant. With the completion of the electoral campaign on March 1, the amount of inter-party violence naturally decreased though some has been reported. The kidnappings of Sean Holly and Gabriel Biguria on March 6, that of German Ambassador von Spreti on March 31, and the capture of four guerrillas with its subsequent firefight between guerrillas and security forces on March 23 were the most important activities of the month within Guatemala City. Out of the City the most significant events included guerrilla-security forces encounters in Quezaltenango and Escuintla and the kidnapping of four military commissioners in Zacapa.

* * * * *

1. The kidnapping by the FAR of Second Secretary Sean Holly on Friday afternoon March 6 and his subsequent release on Sunday in exchange for four guerrillas has been reported elsewhere. Holly's kidnapping has caused the American mission to reappraise its security and adopt new measures such as car pools, some armed follow-cars and changed working hours. The taking of Holly and Biguria caused a wave of kidnap rumors which were sensationally played up by the press. The FAR, no doubt buoyed by its success with Holly, kidnapped von Spreti at 12:30 p.m. on March 31. The subsequent refusal of the Guatemalan government to accept the FAR's terms and the tragic murder of the German diplomat places the whole question of kidnappings and American response to such events in an entirely new perspective. The Embassy is once again reviewing its security situation.

2. The arrest of four men in a Guatemala City bar on the evening of March 22 and their subsequent cooperation with the police led to an attack the next morning on a house in Zone 11 of the City. [REDACTED] The security forces attack was notable for the use made of army helicopters and their immense machinegun firepower. While their compatriots, estimated by the press as four or five, escaped, two other guerrillas were killed. At this writing there still remains doubt concerning the names of those killed. One has been identified as Juan Jose GAMEZ Maldonado, but the other's identity has been variously reported as Jose Antonio HERNANDEZ Estrada or Julio Enrique PINELO Valle. Within the house police found large amounts of FAR propaganda, munitions and bomb making material. Police were wounded by booby-trapped Claymore-type mines when they finally forced their way into the house after the multi-hour battle. The municipal firemen and the Red Cross performed nobly during the encounter by aiding in the evacuation of numerous occupants of adjacent houses. As a result of their activities, the FAR has issued a bulletin warning the two groups not to be used again as tools of the police. In response, the organizations have argued their complete impartiality and humanitarian motives.

3. The same prisoner who led police to the Zone 11 house later led security forces to a hut in Xesiguan near Chimaltenango where Sean Holly was kept during his imprisonment, but though some campesinos were detained for questioning, no arrests were made there. Two other suspected

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guerrillas were arrested in the City as a result of information given by the four taken on March 22. One, Oscar Arturo PALENCIA Pincha, a poet, was subsequently demanded along with the four by the FAR in exchange for Ambassador von Spreti. The four admitted taking part in a number of major terrorist crimes and all six have been officially arraigned and charged with assassination, illegal possession of arms and "infractions against the democratic institutions of the State".

4. In the space of a few days during mid-month, three separate incidents of armed contact between Guatemalan security forces and guerrillas or supposed guerrillas were reported. On the 14th three guerrillas, Miguel Angel de Leon Barrios, brother of a guerrilla killed a number of months previously, Ana Judith Mena Izeppi, a thirty-five year old school teacher, and an unidentified woman, were killed in a shootout in Quezaltenango.

Like the fight eight days later in Guatemala City, their house, too, was fingered by a police prisoner. The FAR of the region has threatened to revenge their deaths. In the reports of the shootout, the taking of prisoners was not mentioned but one of those the FAR requested in exchange for German Ambassador von Spreti was Emilio Rueda Ramirez who they claimed had been picked up by the police on the day of the battle and had since been held incommunicado. Three days later two suspected guerrillas were picked up in San Pedro Sacatepequez, San Marcos by security forces who had rebuffed an attack on a farmhouse in the same area the night before. On the same day two other men were killed in La Gomera, Escuintla after their drunken firing of machineguns in the air had alerted the police. The press labeled them guerrillas though there has been no other confirmation of this fact.

5. Unconfirmed press reports indicate that four military commissioners were kidnapped from a bar in Los Amates, Zacapa on the 29th by a group of armed men whom one report had clad in olive green uniforms. There has been no further information regarding this event.

6. The Nuevo Progreso area of San Marcos saw three separate attacks on isolated fincas by groups of armed men, identified in the press as ranging up to sixteen in number. While simple banditry appeared to be the motive in all cases, the discovery of an unidentified body in the same area on the 20th with five .38 slugs and a FAR death note causes the other incidents to be placed in the category of suspected guerrilla activity. On the 18th, LA NACION reported that a number of finca owners in the Pajapita area of San Marcos were moving into Quezaltenango or Guatemala City to avoid extortion threats made by the FAR or bandits using the FAR's name.

7. In Guatemala City, Jose Bernabe LINARES, ex-chief of the Judicial Police under Ubico and Castillo Armas, was pistolled in front of his home on the 12th of the month. Bernabe, a man who no doubt had many enemies did not get a chance to use the revolver he had on his hip. The FAR/PGT claimed credit for his death. On the same day, a

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national police veteran of twenty years was gunned down off his bicycle while riding home from work. His assailants were two youths on a motorcycle. The passenger hid his gun in a bouquet of flowers. Earlier in the month, Francisco Morales Orantes, a judicial detective, was murdered as he entered the restaurant where he ate dinner nightly.

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8. On the 13th, an auto stolen from an ex-minister of defense was blown up in Zone 12 of the City. An anonymous phone call lured police to the parked Chevrolet. The car had been rigged with a time bomb which fortunately exploded minutes before the unsuspecting police arrived.

9. Salvador Orellana de Leon, El Gallo Giro, famed as a guerrilla leader who became an informer and eventually a trusted bodyguard of Colonel Arana, was wounded by gunfire in Zacapa in mid-month. Somewhat of a romantic figure, his name appeared continually in the press during the month as his recuperation was closely followed. At one point, his death was reported in large headlines, but it was an error and recently, very much alive and surrounded by bodyguards, he expressed confidence in being rewarded by Arana with an important job.

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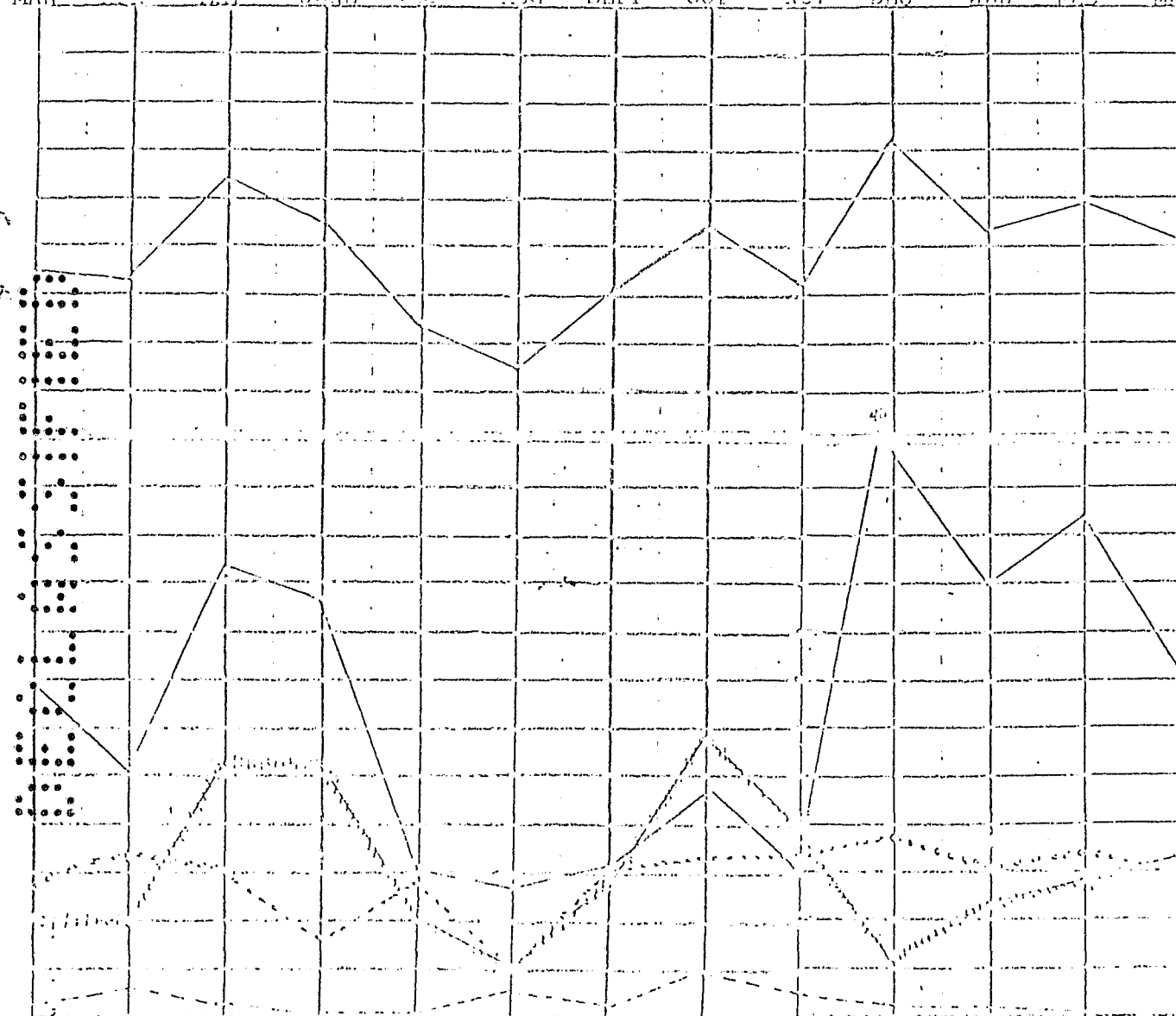
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MONTHLY FREQUENCY OF TERRORISTS RELATED INCIDENTS BY REGION (1) - MARCH 1969 - March 1970

MAR APR MAY JUNE JULY AUG SEPT OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR



*Enc A-77
Guatemala area*

Total - 41

Capital 22 (2)

South Coast 10 (3)
East 9 (2)

Highlands 9 (5)

- (1) For purposes of this graph, acts of violence include shootings, bombings, and assassinated bodies
- (2) Capital Area: Sacatepequez, Guatemala
- (3) South Coast: San Marcos, Quezaltenango, Retalhuleu, Suchitepequez, Escuintla, Santa Rosa
- (4) Eastern Region: Jutiapa, Jalapa, El Progreso, Zacapa, Chiquimula, Izabal
- (5) Highlands: Totonicapán, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, El Quiché, Baja Verapaz, Solola

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